

BOLTON MEMORIAL HALL – A SHORT HISTORY

In 1920 a Committee was set up to oversee the building of a village hall to commemorate those Bolton residents who gave their lives in the First World War. Fund raising was carried out and in due course enough was raised to buy what was known as the mid-town property. Initially the idea was to convert some of the existing buildings into “Parish Rooms” for the community but eventually it was decided to construct a new building, which is the one existing today. There were more fundraising events and with the addition of a grant from the County Council, sufficient money was available for work to commence. The design and construction of the building was undertaken by local people and cost £2,300, worth £121,486 at today’s prices. A new building today would cost considerably more than that, so it looks like a bargain was had. The Hall was opened on the 4th April 1923 by the wife of the sitting MP Colonel Weston. The Colonel himself unveiled the tablet recording the names of the fallen.

A trust deed was set up by the Charities Commission for the management of the Hall. The deed included a statement of the purposes of the hall as follows.

“The Committee shall hold the said hereditaments upon trust to permit the same to be used in perpetuity as a non-sectarian and nonpolitical place of recreation and social intercourse under the name of Bolton Memorial Hall for the advantage or benefit of the inhabitants of Bolton.”

In view of the current range of activities now carried out in the Hall and Field it can certainly be said that the purposes have been fulfilled. These activities include badminton, carpet bowls, the Film Club, the Community Café, the Outreach Post Office, concerts, dramas, meetings of various village groups, and a variety of one-off bookings.

After the Second World War it was decided that the adjoining field, which had been used mainly for grazing, should be acquired and dedicated as a memorial to the dead of that war. After another round of fundraising, the field was purchased, then cleared and levelled by Polish troops based at Warcop – there was no charge! In 1948 the tablet commemorating those who had fought in the War was unveiled by Commander Torbock of Crossrigg Hall. A major event on the Field is the Annual Field day, with its key event of crowning the Rose Queen. This has been held since the early 1950’s. The Village Bonfire night is another regular event which always attracts a good crowd.

Over the next 70 years many enhancements were made to the Hall, including the upgrading of the heating system, the addition of a kitchen and toilets, the installation of solar panels and insulation of the building. The Field has also seen enhancements such as the play area, planting of trees and shrubs, a multi-games area and most recently, the building of the pump track.

The Hall continues to be managed by a Committee of Trustees. A list of the current trustees is available on this website. Several village organisations use the Hall and the Field for their events and meetings. Regular events include the Annual Field Day, and the Bonfire night. Funding is from a combination of charges for use and grants.

A hundred years after its opening, the hall was well due for a major refurbishment. Plans were drawn up for an extension, improvement of the indoor space and a car park. (More information is available on the Memorial Hall page on this website). Once again fundraising was key to the work going ahead, and local fundraising was supplemented by grants from the local authority and the Lottery. The first phase of the project, the car park, was completed in December 2022. We are now raising funds for the next phase, and various events are planned, and grants applied for. Your support for the Hall will be appreciated.